

# First cardiac surgery performed in Zimbabwe in 13 years

After more than a decade, Zimbabwean patients will now have access to cardiac surgery within their own borders.

Due to the country's economic challenges, heart surgery came to a halt in 2003, forcing patients to travel abroad for heart surgery. The privileged who could afford it, would go to other countries for treatment, but the vast majority of patients were unable to afford to do so.

## Life-saving partnership

But a partnership between a medical equipment supplier, Medtronic, and Parirenyatwa Hospital in Harare has resulted in the provision of a \$300,000 heart-lung machine and other vital equipment, which will bring relief for the 400 people on the waiting list for life-saving heart operations.

"We lost at least half of the people who needed surgery during that time – all unnecessary deaths," said Dr David Chimuka, cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon at the Parirenyatwa Hospital.



Doctors at Parirenyatwa Hospital in Zimbabwe prepare for surgery

"When I met with Medtronic, they realised that more than just equipment was required. We needed a long-term solution that would be sustainable into the future. It was a complex challenge, but within 24 hours, they came back with its proposal," said Dr Chimuka. This involved the supply of the equipment on a long-term loan basis, totaling five years, during which Medtronic will service the equipment and transfer skills.

The first paediatric operation has been successfully performed, and it is hoped that 150 surgeries on children and adults will be performed annually.

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